

lowered income and housing levels as well. Since the income and housing levels of a particular locale are related to and dependent upon the education of those working and living there, the income and housing levels will naturally be lowered if many of those capable of earning the best living out-migrate. It is really a very difficult problem to solve because modern day industry requires a well-trained and well-educated labor force, yet, which comes first -- education or good job opportunity? If education precedes job opportunity, those with the best training and education cannot be expected to wait several years for jobs to come to them; however, by the same token, employment requiring skilled development can hardly be expected to come into an area if it must wait several years before it can adequately staff its operation. Actually, it is really a cycle in which poverty breeds poverty and prosperity breeds prosperity, and if a town or geographical area is in a cycle of poor economic development, as is the case with Lincolnton, it is very difficult to break.

While there are no simple solutions or panaceas which will solve this problem for Lincolnton, there is little doubt that an uplifting of educational facilities -- academic, vocational, and technical -- and, as a result educational attainment, will facilitate Lincolnton in her efforts to attract more and higher quality industry. This must be done if Lincolnton and Lincoln County hope to achieve a standard of living comparable to that of urban areas in the United States and North Carolina. Actually, it is a very slow process and one which requires planning for long run results.

In pursuance of this goal there are two factors which should be taken into consideration: 1. reasonably good employment must be made available if the best educated and most productive are to be kept in Lincolnton, and, 2. it is unlikely that an industry requiring a large number of well-trained and well-educated employees would be willing to locate a plant in Lincolnton if it must wait for several years to staff its operation.

With this in mind it appears that the best policy would be to concentrate recruiting efforts toward the attraction of industry which desires to start small, but plans to grow in the future. If this were done, Lincolnton would be able to adequately staff the operation and by so doing be able to provide good employment for those people who would, in all probability, otherwise leave to find it elsewhere. Still others who are presently away at school or in the service or working out of town may return to take employment in Lincolnton as opportunity becomes lucrative.

As a result, over the long run, the quality of Lincolnton's labor force will be vastly improved, and, in so doing, will serve to make the community an even more attractive and profitable place to locate industry. Hopefully, successful implementation of this approach would slowly but surely replace the cycle of poverty with a cycle of prosperity.